

New Readers Start Here:

LORD BRANDON had, during his life-time, so strongly disapproved of his son's association with player-folk that he had disinherited him and, in a new will, had left Brandon Hall to his niece, the Lady Eleanor Beaumont. Lady Eleanor considered this unjust and looked upon herself as usurping her cousin's rights. This last will and testament could not be found, although but three persons knew where it had been deposited—Lord Brandon, Lady Eleanor, and Mr. Sharp, of Sharp & Clipper, Solicitors, Lincoln's Inn. Lord Brandon died, Mr. Sharp had not removed the document, and the Lady Eleanor—?

The new Lord Brandon is in need of ready money to purchase Drury Lane Theatre, in which to produce "The Rivals," a play written by Dick Sheridan, who is to act the leading part. To accomplish this he must sell Brandon Hall, and he visits the office of Sharp & Clipper on the same morning as the Lady Eleanor. Thus they meet for the first time since childhood. He greets the lawyer and his cousin, and brusquely asks what Brandon Hall will bring at auction. Before the lawyer sufficiently recovers from his surprise to give this information, Dick Sheridan, Kitty Clive, and other player-folk, with servants bearing hampers of food and wine, come in. They have followed Charles to celebrate his accession to the title, but more particularly to the estate. They take possession of the office and set out the feast, despite the protests of the lawyer.

Lady Eleanor drops her face in her hands and murmurs, "Was it for this, for this!"

Lord Brandon invites his friends, the player-folk, to his country house to talk over their plans, and to rehearse "The Rivals." Mr. Sharp sends his clerk, Humble Sycamore, up from London with documents for Lord Brandon to sign. Sycamore takes this opportunity to make love to Miss Chaffers, Lady Eleanor's aunt, and persuades her to promise to marry him on the assumption that he is coming into a fortune of seven hundred pounds a year.

Lady Eleanor's maid, Sophia, tells Miles, the butler, that she has the late Lord Brandon's last will, and proposes that they extort money from Lord Brandon as the price of their silence, and for giving up the will.

Lord Brandon tells Lady Eleanor that he loves her, but she will not listen, declaring that her only lover died in London, and that none but he shall ever call her wife. Lord Brandon in despair flings himself into a chair saying, "He whom you loved is dead, yet dying, loved you. My love lives, but turns from me in loathing."

Sophia confronts Lord Brandon with the will, demanding two thousand pounds for its surrender. He makes her give it to him. His friends, impatient at his absence, come in, and he tells them he wishes them to remain as witnesses. He then sends for Lady Eleanor and has Sycamore spread all the papers on the table ready to be signed. She protests against the sale of Brandon Hall, and sadly threatens him with another document which will make the sale impossible and sends Sophia for the will. The girl goes, and Lord Brandon produces the will and starts Sycamore on his way to London to "register it, replevin it, habeas corpus it, or do whatever your knavish trade finds necessary, and don't forget your fees. Now, away with you!"

CHAPTER VI.

THAT section of St. James' Park surrounding Rosamond's Pond was an ideal place in which to linger. A summer-house, sheltered by a thick shrubbery, yet open to the lake, held a comfortable bench which invited rest and pleasant meditation, and the banks of the water were studded picturesquely with trees that afforded seclusion without shutting away



If I am disappointed again, I shall feel like throwing myself into the cold embrace of Lake Rosamonda.

LADY ELEANOR: LAWBREAKER

A stirring tale of ye olden days

By ROBERT BARR

Illustrated by
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the sunlight. Lord Brandon, however, leaning on the railing that guarded Rosamond's Pond, evinced no appreciation of the natural beauties about him, and the impatient manner in which he flicked at the herbage with his cane indicated a state of mind little attuned to the peace of the placid water.

"For three mornings I have followed her here," he said, half aloud, "and on the fourth, determined to come to closer quarters, it will be just my luck if she stops away."

THE sound of approaching footsteps brought to Brandon's disconsolate face a flush of hope, which as quickly died away when he recognized Richard Sheridan, who seemed to be in high good spirits.

"The top of the morning to you, Lord Misanthrope!" cried the newcomer, cordially. "I heard the sound of your voice, Charlie. What are you doing? Rehearsing or soliloquising?"

"I am learning my part, to be word perfect when the play comes on."

"And an excellent place you have chosen, Charlie. Bishop Warburton said that this spot was consecrated to disastrous love and elegiac poetry. Are you courting the elegiac Muse, or waiting for some more modern and fashionable goddess?"

"Neither the one nor the other, Dick, but to match your quotation from the Bishop, I give you one from Pope, who, in his 'Rape of the Lock,' says:

"This the blest lover shall for Venus take, And send up vows from Rosamonda's Lake."

So, my volatile and amorous friend, if you are here to keep a tryst, I will leave the coast of Rosamonda clear for you."

"Charlie, your insinuation is most unjust," laughed Sheridan, easily. "There's no more faithful benedict in town than I. No, I came to find my melancholy Lord of Brandon."

"And how did you know I was here?"

"Still incredulous? Why, by the easiest method in the world. I called to see you at your apartments, and your man informed me you were much depressed these last few days, and had taken to rambling in St. James' Park. He feared the Pond might claim you, as it had done so many others of the dejected, but I told him his master was too good a judge of wine to waste himself on so much insipid water, and further informed him I had news to cheer you, so the honest fellow bade me Godspeed, and here I am. See how simple a tale will put you down, with your dark hints of trysts."

"What is your cheerful news, Sheridan?"

"I am promised the money for certain."

"How much?"

"Twenty thousand pounds."

"Good lord! Has Garrick become generous in his old age, then?"

"Oh, Garrick is not so penurious as the gossips pretend he is."

"It is Garrick, then?"

"I am forbidden to say whether or no. I am bound to secrecy."

"Then it's not Garrick?"

"That's as may be. I have given my word. I must not blab, even to you."

Truth to tell, I do not know myself for a certainty who the generous donor is. I seem to have made a conquest. The main thing is the gold, and once my hands are on it, the first thousand goes to you, to repay the timely loan you made me when we thought you were rich. That debt is weighing on my mind, Brandon. Tomorrow you shall have it, unless the devil stacks the cards against me once more."

"I shall be glad of the thousand pounds, but not for my own enrichment. The money will not be in my possession an hour."

"What! Is the heiress in town?"

"Yes. You see, I took the money from

her in all good faith when I thought it my own."

"DOES the sour old spinster prove close-fisted? Has she pressed for payment?"

"What sour old spinster?"

"The heiress."

"Why, she is the most beautiful and divine creature the sun ever shone on, and scarce twenty yet."

"Ah, I never saw her, then."

"You saw her at the lawyer's den when first, mistakenly, I went to claim my heritage."

"The lady I met there, who I understood was your relative, seemed nearer twice twenty than the even score."

"Oh, that was Aunt Selina. 'Tis the other I mean."

"I do not remember any other."

"Dick, Dick, where were your eyes?"

"I fear, Charlie, they were gazing in the clouds at the new theatre we were to build. I was living in the future rather than the present, and when later I visited Brandon Hall I saw

no ladies except those we brought with us from London."

"My cousin entertains rural prejudices against our profession, and although I did introduce to her the coterie from Drury Lane, that was after you had gone. Do you mean to tell me you never noticed her at Sharp & Clipper's office? Why, I certainly introduced you to her."

"I RECOLLECT no introduction, and no young lady such as you describe so eloquently," said Sheridan with conviction.

"Then for once, Dick, your eye for beauty failed you. If I should chance to meet her to-day—"

"You have not met her yet?"

"No; I fear my difficulty may be that she will refuse the money."

"I wish I could imbue my creditors with a similar reluctance!" murmured Sheridan.

"What I was about to say," went on Brandon, "is this. Am I safe in promising the money within a week?"

"Take my advice, and promise nothing till we have the gold in hand."

"Ah, you are not sure of it? Very well; I shall not mention it. I thought you were in rather an exalted frame of mind, and so became certain of the payment."

"Exalted! Yes; I can think of nothing else; and it elates me, so I sought you out. If a man has mirth or money, let him share it with his friend. Mirth to-day, and money to-morrow."

"Let us trust so."

"Trust; yes. What is life without trust and hope? If I am disappointed again, I shall feel like throwing myself into the cold embrace of Rosamonda here."

He waved his hand toward the lake. "But, zounds, Charlie, think of what it means for us if everything comes right! Drury Lane is ours, then fame and fortune. Away with doubt! We'll believe in the money to-day even though it escape our clutch to-morrow. Come, Charlie, let's walk over Constitution Hill, and revel in our riches."

"I'll come to-morrow, when the gold's secure."

"But you've no appointment here with a woman, you said."

"I have not spoken to a woman for a month."

"Perhaps you've written to bespeak her company?"

"I have not written to a woman for a year."

"Then let's to Constitution Hill. Ah, here comes at last a fitting companion for the gloomy prince, whom even the chink of gold can't cheer. Bowed head, slow step, dejected mien: an elegiac, poetic form, moving slowly toward the spot of disastrous love. Ah, Charlie, Charlie, and for the moment I believed you! Egad, I am growing old and good."

Brandon glanced behind him, recognized Lady Eleanor Beaumont, and shook Sheridan briskly by the hand.

"Good-bye, my friend, good-bye. Your news has quite buoyed me up, so now adieu. I'll see you in the morning. I shall do myself the honour to call at Orchard Street, (Continued on page 41)